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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR - UNOFFICIAL SETTLEMENTS NEAR SEKELE PRESENT
HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

REF: 07 KHARTOUM 1669

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¶11. (U) SUMMARY: New settlements near Sekele (near Nyala, South Darfur) originated in October 2007 as a result of GNU HAC efforts to relocate IDPs who fled Kalma camp following inter-tribal violence in that camp. While the GNU HAC completed the resettlement process, approximately 500 additional families temporarily settled in the wadi (seasonal riverbed adjacent to the settlement site) hoping to receive government assistance. The current estimated population of the wadi settlement is approximately 2,000 households, and families continue to arrive. The GNU HAC has not allowed humanitarian agencies to provide assistance to the individuals living in the wadi, asserting that the "wadi people" are not conflict affected people and have only come to Sekele from Nyala town seeking free services. Due to the current water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions in the wadi, humanitarian agencies are concerned that the upcoming rainy season will cause the wadi residents to be particularly susceptible to disease outbreaks. Immediate action is required on the part of the GNU HAC and the UN to agree on a way forward in dealing with the wadi residents. End summary.

BACKGROUND

¶12. (U) As part of what is perceived by many in the international community to be a GNU strategy to draw people out of IDP camps, the GNU HAC dedicated land in South Darfur for settlement areas. In October 2007, the Governor of South Darfur announced plans to divide Kalma IDP camp into nine smaller settlements near Nyala town, South Darfur. The first area settled was located at Block 21 south of Nyala town. Relief agencies use several names for the site, including Sekele resettlement, Sekele New, and Sekele South, to differentiate the new settlement location from Sekele Old Camp. Located 2-3 km north of the new Sekele settlement site, Sekele Old

Camp was established in 2004 and currently houses approximately 5,133 IDPs. Sekele New settlement originated in October 2007 when the GNU HAC relocated IDPs who fled Kalma camp to the location. From October 26 to 28, 2007, the Government of National Unity (GNU) Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) resettled approximately 560 households from Majok village in South Darfur into Sekele New settlement. The internally displaced persons (IDPs) had fled to Majok village after fighting in Kalma IDP camp from October 16 to 18 between different camp factions drove them out of Kalma.

OFFICIALLY RESETTLED IDPS

¶3. (U) The GNU HAC has provided land and services, including education, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene, to approximately 560 former Kalma IDP households officially settled in Sekele New. In October 2007, Medecins Sans Frontieres Netherlands (MSF/H) and several other relief agencies began providing residents of Sekele New with humanitarian assistance, including a MSF/H-established health clinic. MSF/H plans to withdraw from the site by the end of March 2008, as emergency needs following the Kalma relocation have subsided.

¶4. (SBU) After a site assessment of Sekele New in late October, the International Migration Organization (IOM) determined that the IDPs that the GNU HAC relocated to Sekele on February 26 to 28 did not move voluntarily. This can be attributed to GNU efforts to divide Kalma camp but also to the inter-tribal fighting that occurred in the camp. It is still unclear whether the GNU HAC informed the IDPs who resettled in Sekele that having a resettled status disqualifies them from receiving humanitarian assistance, negates any rights IDPs have to return to original locations, and prevents the IDPs from receiving compensation in accordance with the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

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INFORMAL WADI SETTLEMENTS NEAR SEKELE

¶5. (SBU) While the GNU HAC was resettling the 560 households into Sekele camp, a group of approximately 500 families temporarily moved into the wadi adjacent to the settlement site, hoping to receive government assistance. On November 10 and 11, 2007, Sudanese government National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) officials destroyed the informal settlement and forced all of the families to leave. On November 10, the GNU HAC and NISS denied the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other humanitarian agencies access to the Sekele settlement. IOM has a standing Memorandum of Understanding with the GoS allowing IOM full access to IDPs and further acknowledges IOM's approved mandate to verify the voluntary and appropriate nature of population movement. MSF/H wrote several letters to the GNU HAC and the governor's office condemning the dismantling of the informal settlement. According to MSF/H, the families left for approximately one week and then returned to the wadi near Sekele.

¶6. (U) Many other individuals from the Burum, Tulus, and Ed Al Fursan areas of South Darfur have spontaneously arrived at the settlement site. MSF/H reported multiple reasons behind the movement to the wadi, including GNU HAC's refusal to register new IDPs in nearby Al Salam camp or other camps, food insecurity in villages of origin, recent clashes in Buram, and rumors of free land distribution for IDPs. On February 13, trucks carrying approximately 100 individuals, primarily women and children, were turned away from Al Salam camp. On February 14, local officials at the Sekele New relocation site turned away a vehicle suspected to be the same truck that sought entry to Al Salam. The following day a truck offloaded an undetermined number of people into the wadi adjacent to the Sekele settlement. In February 2008, the estimated population of wadi residents near Sekele settlement was 2,000 households. From February 25 to March 2, MSF/H reported the arrival of 70 new households.

¶7. (SBU) The GNU HAC has repeatedly refused to recognize the wadi-dwellers as IDPs and asserts that the individuals are just poor people from Nyala town and have come to Sekele to collect free services. The GNU HAC has not allowed humanitarian agencies to provide assistance to populations living in the wadi. MSF/H has trucked in water and provided mats for emergency shelter in the unofficial settlement, however. The wadi-dwellers are able to access the MSF/H clinic in Sekele, which currently services both the resettled IDPs in the Sekele settlement and surrounding community residents. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) provided relief commodities for the wadi residents, but the humanitarian community is not currently providing food assistance. MSF/H reports that most of the people living in the wadi travel to Nyala town each day to find work in order to buy food. According to MSF/H, the nutritional status of the wadi residents is stable, but increasing cases of diarrhea have occurred among the wadi-dwellers in January and February 2008, as no clean water and sanitation facilities are available.

FUTURE CONCERNS

¶8. (U) The upcoming rainy season will cause the wadi people near Sekele settlement to be particularly susceptible to disease outbreaks, due to the current water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions in the wadi. MSF/H reports open defecation in the wadi area and noted concerns that a possible disease outbreak in the wadi could spread to Nyala town.

¶9. (SBU) While the emergency needs of the officially resettled IDPs in Sekele New have lessened since Sekele New's establishment in October 2007, the needs of the wadi residents surrounding Sekele settlement remain. If MSF/H ceases relief operations in Sekele by the end of March as planned, the situation of the wadi settlement

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could become increasingly precarious. Questions regarding the voluntary nature of the GNU HAC's official settlement of Sekele and the future status of the resettled IDPs also present potential humanitarian consequences.

¶10. (SBU) MSF/H has approached the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to elicit U.N. engagement and assistance for the wadi people. Since late November 2007, U.N. partners have discussed the humanitarian situation of the wadi people with GNU HAC officials multiple times, but the GNU HAC continues to insist that NGO partners conduct further assessments of the population, delaying a decision on the wadi dwellers' official status. The NGO assessments conducted to date reveal humanitarian needs, such as appropriate shelter and water, sanitation, and hygiene services. In early November, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) proposed to respond to the water, sanitation, and hygiene needs of the wadi settlers, but the GNU HAC denied IRC permission to conduct an assessment of the wadi and refused to allow IRC staff to interview Sekele IDP leaders, insisting that the wadi-dwellers are squatters from Nyala town and therefore ineligible for humanitarian assistance. The GNU HAC contends that the potential of relief assistance continues to draw the "wadi people" to Sekele and that the population will leave if the provision of humanitarian aid ceases. The upcoming rainy season will force the population living in the wadi to relocate and disperse into the surrounding areas, where the group's humanitarian needs will be less visible.

¶11. (U) The situation in Al Salam IDP camp, also near Nyala town, is similar to that of the Sekele settlement. The GNU HAC closed Al Salam camp on February 13 and began turning away all newly arrived IDPs. Al Salam was the only remaining camp open to new arrivals before the February 13 closure. IDPs who arrived between February 10 and 13 remain unregistered, and IDP leaders in Al Salam camp estimate that 1,700 unregistered households are living in Al Salam camp. Tensions remain high in Al Salam, with GNU HAC officials forbidding relief workers from assisting all unregistered new arrivals. Since February 13, some of the IDPs turned away from Al Salam Camp have settled in the Sekele wadi.

CONCLUSIONS

¶12. (SBU) The GNU HAC prefers that relief agencies provide assistance to beneficiaries in the villages of origin or at returnee sites, but has yet to provide a solution for IDPs who have already migrated to informal settlements like Sekele. USAID FieldOffs will continue to work with the humanitarian community and the HAC in South Darfur to find a viable solution to the situation in Sekele before the rainy season presents further health and sanitation risks to the wadi people and surrounding areas. USAID FieldOffs will seek to obtain approval from the HAC to allow NGOs to provide assistance to the wadi people and/or approval to move the wadi people to an already existing camp in Nyala in order that they might receive food and non-food assistance.

FERNANDEZ